

ASCENSION CHAMBER LOCAL ELECTION PLATFORM

Thanks to a thriving economy, a high performing public-school system and a low crime rate, Ascension Parish is setting the standard for growth in the Capital Region. While some neighboring parishes are losing residents, Ascension Parish is growing at an unprecedented rate – a testament to the quality of life and economic opportunity our parish has to offer. However, such rapid growth has presented challenges that threaten to slow, and even halt, the economic momentum we are currently experiencing.

At the Ascension Chamber of Commerce, it is our mission to facilitate and foster economic growth for our members. To deliver on this mission, the Chamber is continually working to enhance the business environment in Ascension Parish by supporting carefully considered pro-growth policies and initiatives that drive progress and cultivate economic opportunity in our communities.

After polling our membership and consulting with business leaders and stakeholders from around the parish, the chamber has developed a platform of policies and initiatives we wish to see candidates running for public office in Ascension Parish support in their candidacy to serve the residents of this great parish.

The platform is broken out into three subject areas the Ascension Chamber believes are critical to maintain and enhance the economic vitality and quality of life in Ascension Parish.

SUBJECT 1:

Develop viable solutions to address Ascension Parish's overloaded and outdated infrastructure.

- **Transportation**

- Actively pursue ways to increase the parish's investment in local transportation infrastructure that will help address the \$40 million annual funding gap recently identified between the cost of future transportation infrastructure needs in the parish (\$60 million) and what is currently being spent on road projects (\$20 million).
- Continue to support the parish's local road project initiative, Move Ascension, which prioritizes local road projects by using traffic and safety data, not politics.
- Continue working with state and regional stakeholders, like the Capital Area Road and Bridge District, to secure funding for a new southern Mississippi River bridge crossing and the widening of Highway 30 as the eastside interstate connector route.

- **Parish Wide Sewer**

- If approved, continue to support the Ascension Sewer, LLC plan to install a comprehensive waste water treatment system in Ascension Parish. Our membership survey showed that 95% of respondents supported the Ascension Sewer buildout plan, identifying the need to stop the continued contamination of our parish

ditches and waterways as the primary reason to connect and modernize our current outdated and failing sewer treatment system.

- **Stormwater Drainage**

- Focus the parish's stormwater management efforts and resources on dredging parish waterways to maximize their holding capacities and flowrates. Create more transparency by developing a publicly accessible database that tracks progress on major dredging projects planned for or underway in the parish.
- Breakdown the current floodplain management planning silos by partnering with East Baton Rouge Parish and Livingston Parish, along with the Amite River Basin Commission, to develop a unified floodplain management plan that includes a comprehensive list of data-driven stormwater drainage projects that mitigate future flood risk for the entire region and not just one parish.

SUBJECT 2:

Support economic development incentives and workforce development programs that continue to generate momentum for our local economy.

- **Maintain Ascension Parish's Economic Competitive Advantage**

- Continue to promote a healthy business climate by supporting local economic development programs like the Ascension Advantage Program and the Industrial Property Tax Exemption Program (ITEP) that attract capital investment and create jobs in our parish.

- **Workforce Development and Talent Retention/Attraction**

- Partner with Ascension Public Schools and other local and regional stakeholders to facilitate workforce development programs, like the Work Ready Ascension initiative, that seek to fill gaps in the local workforce by educating and training our homegrown talent to specifically meet the workforce needs identified by Ascension Parish employers.

SUBJECT 3:

Develop a long-term, pro-growth vision for Ascension Parish that strategically aligns future growth management with infrastructure planning and investment.

- **Ascension Parish Master Plan**

- Embrace the Ascension Master Plan using it as a guide to implement smart growth planning and development strategies that coordinate infrastructure projects with planned land development to ensure parish road and drainage systems will support projected increases in traffic counts and water runoff.

- **Mitigating Future Flood Risks**

- Adopt study-driven mitigation and fill practices proven to mitigate the risk of future flooding in the parish but do not negatively impact future development by placing unnecessary and burdensome restrictions on developers and homebuilders.

